BETWEEN THE LINES *Patricia Holt* — S.F. CHRONICLE Review — 9/19/93

Another JFK Assassination Theory

Two readers who wrote of their concerns about conspiracy theories following my review of "Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assasination of JFK" (Random House; 607 pages; $25; Review, September 5), an updated report awaits your scrutiny in San Francisco author and former RFK speechwriter Bob Callahan's nifty new paperback, **"WHO SHOT JFK? A Guide to the Major Conspiracy Theories"** (Firestone; 159 pages; $12).

Yes, it's all here, sort of: The Warren Commission and its much-disputed report that Lee Harvey Oswald was the "lone gunman"; the House Select Committee on Assassination and *its* report that "at least two shooters" had been involved in a conspiracy; the FBI agents who fired Oswald's rifle with its misaligned scope and couldn't hit a stationary target 15 feet away; the "magic bullet," "stretcher bullet," "pristine bullet" all in one; the "Dallas Cuban Connection"; the Mafia, the KGB, Oliver Stone and more.

Then there are the controversies, some 38 in all: the "Dallas Police Cover-Up Controversy" (about Oswald *and* Jack Ruby); the New York Times controversy (its book, "The Witnesses," "was carefully edited to present only those selections which supported the Commission's findings"); the "FBI Autopsy Report Controversy" and its corollaries, the "mysterious back wound" and "bunched shirt" theories; the "CIA Counter Attack Controversy" (agents were urged to convince "friendly" book review editors to write "that parts of the conspiracy talk appear to be deliberately generated by Communist propaganda"); "The FBI Cover-Up Controversy" (more busy agents!); and still more.

Playfully illustrated with comic-strip art by Mark Zingarelli, the book entertains even the silliest of controversies as well: Was it really "LSD Lee," as Callahan nicknames Oswald, who showed up at a New Orleans assistant district attorney's office a month *before* the assassination complaining that the CIA had spiked his drinks with LSD while he was stationed at Atsugi Air Base in Japan? Why not, Callahan shrugs: "It's known the CIA continued [LSD] experiments at two overseas stations into the early 1960s," one of which was Atsugi, where Oswald served and "where the Agency regularly fed mescaline, sodium pentothal, downers, speed and LSD to local bar-hopping, off-duty U.S. Marines."

Callahan does a good job tracking controversies and theories, but he doesn't show how every conspiracy has been supported *and* refuted by just about every other. In the end, we know two things: The JFK assassination occurred on November 22, 1963; the JFK *literature* with its own language and esoterica will probably outlive us all. ■

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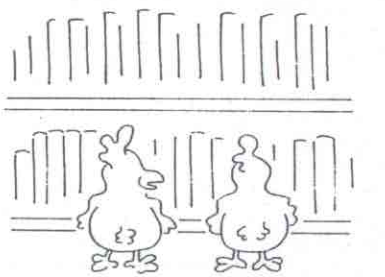
T.O. SYLVESTER



Refresh my memory: Do we love James Herriot or do we hate James Herriot?

Copies sent to JM & CG

S.F. CHRONICLE - 9/28/93

How LBJ Drafted JFK Death Probers

Los Angeles Times

Washington

President Lyndon B. Johnson used the fear of nuclear war with the Soviet Union to persuade key national leaders to participate in the Warren Commission investigation into the slaying of John F. Kennedy, newly released White House telephone transcripts showed yesterday.

Records opened by the National Archives show that Johnson expressed his worries to Senator Richard Russell, once a leader of Southern Democrats, and to Chief Justice Earl Warren that unverified rumors about involvement of Soviet or Cuban officials in the Kennedy assassination might push the United States into a war that could "kill 40 million Americans in an hour."

"I can't arrest you and I'm not going to put the FBI on you, but you're goddamned sure going to serve," Johnson told Russell, who was reluctant to participate in the commission because of his dislike of Warren. The chief justice had written a unanimous 1954 Supreme Court decision declaring public school segregation unconstitutional.

The records also contain Johnson's claim that Warren "started crying" when Johnson refused to let him off the hook in a face-to-face meeting in the Oval Office.

Warren and Russell later served together on the commission, which found in 1964 that Lee Harvey Oswald had acted as a lone assassin.

The transcripts of Johnson's phone conversations in the weeks immediately after the Nov. 22, 1963, assassination were made public to comply with legislation approved by Congress last year ordering virtually all official records on the slaying opened to the public. Aides said Johnson made a practice of secretly recording most of his key telephone calls.